when our actual tonnage was being appreciably reduced by the action of submarines.

2. CONTROL AND RESTRICTION OF IMPORTS

Now we come to the further measures taken by the Government to secure the most economical use of our dwindling shipping resources, and to cut down as fully as possible all non-essential imports, in order to concentrate upon the supply of the nation's rigidly essential needs.

These measures ought to have been taken systematically as soon as it became clear—as it certainly did in 1915—that the War might last for *[illegible]* years, and would strain the resources of the belligerent nations to the utmost, and especially when it became evident that our tonnage was becoming more and more inadequate to the demands made upon it. Whilst our vital war demands were increasing and would continue to increase, our available shipping was diminishing through submarine action and ordinary sea losses and being insufficiently replaced. The measures enforced prior to 1917 for the limitation of imports were of a timid and half-hearted character, and had only a very limited effect in determining which of our imports should be sacrificed to the shipping shortage.

There were two lines of action by which the Government and the nation could adapt themselves to the reduction in their

imports forced
Two ways of upon them by shortage of
shipping. One
^*supplies* ^ was to cut down consumption to
the lowest
practicable limits, in fact
confining it to
the barest essentials. The other was to
increase to